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NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

CAPSTONE

THE IMMERSION EFFECT

by

Andrew A. Potts

December 2016

Thesis Advisor:
Second Reader:

Hy Rothstein
Doowan Lee

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THE IMMERSION EFFECT

Andrew A. Potts
Major, United States Army
B.S., University of North Carolina, 2006

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN DEFENSE ANALYSIS

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
December 2016**

Approved by: Hy Rothstein
Thesis Advisor

Doowan Lee
Second Reader

John Arquilla
Chair, Department of Defense Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This project seeks to improve foreign language and cultural acquisition methods for active component (AC) psychological operations (PSYOP) personnel. This project leverages official documents and empirical evidence, and data to determine the requisite levels of foreign language and cultural proficiency. Various methods of foreign language and cultural acquisition are reviewed to determine a method suitable for PSYOP personnel. These methods are then compared against those used by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Foreign Area Officer, and the United States Army Special Warfare Center and School language and culture acquisition programs to determine the effectiveness of each. This research concludes that immersion is a critical and necessary element of foreign language acquisition. Immersion replicates natural language acquisition, similar to the process by which children learn to speak. This research offers methods by which advanced language and culture proficiency can be achieved through an immersion-based language acquisition program.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AAA	advise, assist, accompany
AC	active component
ACS	advanced civil schooling
AOC	area of concentration
ARFORGEN	Army force generation
ARSOF	Army special operations forces
ANA	Afghan National Army
BSOLT	basic special operations language training
CA	civil affairs
CE	continuing education
CJCS	chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
CJCSI	chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff instruction
CLT	communicative language teaching
CMF	career management field
DLPT	defense language proficiency test
DLI	defense language institute
DOD	department of defense
DODI	department of defense instruction
FAO	foreign area officer
FID	foreign internal defense
FLED	foreign language education
FLIAP	foreign language initial acquisition
FM	field manual
FRIE	fast rope insertion and extraction
GT	grammar translation
IE	information environment
ILR	interagency language roundtable
IRT	in region training
JP	joint publication
JCET	joint combined exchange training
JSOU	joint special operations university

KJV	King James Version
LCA	language and culture acquisition
LDS	latter-day saints
MISO	military information support operations
MISG	military information support group
MSA	modern standard Arabic
MTT	mobile training team
MYC	missionary training center
MTOE	modified table of organization and equipment
NIV	new international version
OJT	on the job training
OPI	oral proficiency interview
PO	psychological operations
POI	program of instruction
PSYOP	psychological operations
RC	reserve component
SF	Special Forces
SFA	security force assistance
SLA	second language acquisition
SO	special operations
SOF	special operations forces
SPIE	special patrol insertion and extraction
SWCS	special warfare center and school
SWEG	special warfare education group
TA	target audience
TAA	train, advise, assist
TPDD	tactical product development detachment
USAJFKSWCS	United States Army John F Kennedy special warfare center and school
USASOC	United States Army special operations command
USD(P&R)	undersecretary of defense for policy and readiness
USG	United States government
UW	unconventional warfare

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I. INTRODUCTION

If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his own language, that goes to his heart.

—Nelson Mandela¹

A. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Do active component (AC) Psychological Operations (PSYOP) personnel require foreign language and cultural proficiency communicate with foreign populations as part of the SOF core task Military Information Support Operations (MISO)? If so, what level of foreign language proficiency is recommended? How can foreign language and cultural acquisition methods be improved for PSYOP personnel? The preliminary literature review indicates a significant gap between required and actual language and cultural proficiency. The proficiency gaps identified prevents PSYOP personnel from effectively executing MISO.

B. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Active component (AC) PSYOP personnel lack advanced foreign language and cultural proficiency. Current personnel management practices prevent acquisition foreign language and cultural proficiency through immersion, as intended based on official documents including Army Field Manuals concerning MISO, and the United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) regulation concerning SOF.² Deployment data reveals that only two percent of the total PSYOP community experienced regionally specific repetitious immersion between 2012 and 2014.³ This trend indicates that PSYOP personnel are not exposed to foreign populations with the frequency and duration

¹ Patricia W. Garamendi, “Forward,” in *At Home in the World: The Peace Corps Story* (Washington, DC: Peace Corps, 1996), vi.

² USASOC Regulation 350–11 and FM 3–53 both reference language and cultural immersion associated with operations to the region for which personnel are trained.

³ Existing data set obtained from the Military Information Support Operations Command G3/5 office.

required to develop advanced levels of foreign language and cultural proficiency through deployment-related immersion. Interpreter support it cannot be guaranteed.

Personnel assignment practices contribute to declining foreign language proficiency as well. For example, the company commanded by the author was responsible for MISO support to the U.S. Africa Combatant Command (USAFRICOM) commander, requiring personnel proficient in French, Arabic, Swahili, and Hausa. Official documents are published to guide the personnel assignment process to ensure that units are capable of meeting the mission requirements for their assigned regions. Table 1 represents a snapshot of the foreign languages assigned to the company commanded by the author compared against the Army's modified table of organization and equipment (MTOE) requirements.⁴

Table 1. Modified Table of Organization and Equipment (MTOE) Snapshot of Assigned Personnel by Language.

CHARLIE COMPANY 9TH MISB		
LANGUAGE	REQ STR	ASSIGNED
SWAHILI	28	0
FRENCH	14	7
HAUSA	8	0
ARABIC	4	2
TOTAL	54	9
PERCENT CORRECTLY ASSIGNED		16.67%

At maximum manning, the author's company had a total of forty-one PSYOP personnel assigned; only eighteen of whom spoke a foreign language designated for use in AFRICA, according to MTOE. Languages associated with the remaining personnel included Korean, Spanish, German, Chinese, Russian, Pashto, and Dari. This serves to demonstrate the extent to which PSYOP personnel are improperly assigned outside of the region for which they were trained. Fifty-six percent of the PSYOP personnel in the

⁴ 7th Military Information Support Battalion Modified Table of Organization and Equipment, UIC WJWWAA, Para 301, DOCNO 33725GSP07, EDATE 16-OCT-17, accessed December 12, 2016, FMSWeb.army.mil.

author's company were assigned improperly according to official documents. It is logical to conclude that it is impossible to achieve foreign language and cultural proficiency under the current model, which relies solely on deployment based immersion for repetitious and persistent exposure.

Arturo Munoz of the RAND Corporation conducted a study that evaluates nine lines of persuasion (themes) to determine MISO effectiveness in Afghanistan from 2001–2005, depicted in Table 2. Munoz' study reveals that PSYOP personnel were only capable of influencing the population in three out of nine themes evaluated. This indicates a success rate of only thirty-three percent. Additionally, most themes lost their initial effectiveness after five years of continuous MISO execution. These results signify a complete failure for two themes and a successive reduction in effectiveness during the lifespan of three themes. Four of the themes evaluated were received with mixed effectiveness throughout the assessment.

Table 2. Major Themes in Psychological Operations⁵

Theme	Assessment		
	Effective	Mixed	Ineffective
The war on terror justifies U.S. intervention.			Ineffective
Coalition forces bring peace and progress.	Effective 2001–2005	Mixed 2006–2010	
Al-Qai'da and the Taliban are enemies of the Afghan people.		Mixed	
Monetary rewards are offered for the capture of al-Qai'da and Taliban leaders.			Ineffective
Monetary rewards are offered for turning in weapons.		Mixed	
Support of local Afghans is needed to eliminate IEDs.		Mixed	
U.S. forces have overwhelming technological superiority over the Taliban.	Effective 2001–2005	Mixed 2006–2010	
GIRoA and ANSF bring peace and progress.		Mixed	
Democracy benefits Afghanistan, and all Afghans need to participate in elections.	Effective 2001–2005	Mixed 2006–2010	

NOTE: IED = improvised explosive device. ANSF = Afghan National Security Forces.

⁵ Arturo Munoz, *U.S. Military Information Operations in Afghanistan: Effectiveness of Psychological Operations 2001–2010* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2012), xviii.

Munoz summarizes the problem in Afghanistan as a “failure to adequately incorporate Pashtun perceptions and attitudes [which] negate[s] the potential effectiveness of many PSYOP products.”⁶ The study indicates that Taliban messaging resonates with greater effectiveness than that employed by PSYOP. Munoz attributes this to the Taliban’s superior knowledge of local language and culture.⁷ Succinctly put, the Taliban possesses foreign language and cultural superiority over PSYOP personnel. This enables Taliban messaging to dominate the information environment (IE) thereby achieving influence over the Afghan population.

C. SCOPE

The author’s research goals are fourfold, 1) demonstrate a requirement for advanced foreign language and cultural proficiency among PSYOP personnel to execute MISO; 2) determine the best method of second language acquisition to meet the actual requirements of PSYOP personnel; 3) identify existing language acquisition programs with the potential to meet PSYOP requirements; 4) offer recommendations to address gaps in PSYOP personnel foreign language and cultural acquisition.

D. METHODOLOGY

In this project the author analyzed official documents associated with Military Information Support Operations (MISO) to establish the need for advanced levels of language, regional and cultural proficiency. Required language standards for PSYOP personnel were identified using official publications from Department of Defense (DOD) and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Staff (CJCS). Identified requirements were then compared against standards published in United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) regulations for SOF. Various approaches and methods in language teaching and acquisition were explored to identify a method capable of meeting the requirements of PSYOP personnel. Three case studies into existing foreign language

⁶ Arturo Munoz, *U.S. Military Information Operations in Afghanistan: Effectiveness of Psychological Operations 2001–2010* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2012), xviii.

⁷ Ibid.

acquisition programs were conducted to determine the effects of immersion on foreign language acquisition. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints missionary program was selected based on its short classroom and long immersion model of foreign language acquisition. The Foreign Area Officer program was selected based on its long classroom and long immersion model of foreign language acquisition. The basic special operations language-training (BSOLT) program was selected based its long classroom and no immersion model of foreign language acquisition. Recommendations are presented at the conclusion of this research to improve foreign language and cultural acquisition of PSYOP personnel.

E. LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of doctrine identifies a critical need for foreign language proficiency, cultural capabilities, and regional expertise in the execution of MISO. Definitions are provided for contextual application of each skill. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction (CJCSI) defines foreign language proficiency, “the ability to understand and operate in a language other than English.”⁸ The Department of Defense (DOD) defines cultural capabilities as, “the skills and knowledge that enable personnel to adapt and function effectively in any culture to achieve mission success [including] culture-general capabilities that promote effective development and use of regional expertise.”⁹ DOD defines regional expertise, “knowledge about a specific region of the world that focuses on but is not limited to the political, historical, cultural, sociological, economic, and geographic factors of that region.”¹⁰

As defined by Joint Publication (JP) 3–13.2, Military Information Support Operations (MISO), “are planned operations to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning,

⁸ Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction (CJCSI) 3126.01A, *Language, Regional Expertise and Culture (LREC) Capability Identification, Planning, and Sourcing* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2013), E-1.

⁹ Department of Defense Directive (DODD) 5160.41E, *Defense Language, Regional Expertise, and Culture Program (DLRECP)* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2005), 14.

¹⁰ DODD 5160.41E, *DLRECP*, 14.

and ultimately the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals in a manner favorable to the originator's objectives."¹¹ Essentially, MISO employs the art of persuasion to achieve U.S. foreign policy in addition to strategic, operational, and tactical objectives. The Army MISO Field Manual affirms that conventional PSYOP personnel are limited by their lack foreign language training, "conventional MISO forces [are] constrained...by their limited regional language training."¹² From an accession training perspective, foreign language is the only enabling competency that separates conventional supporting reserve PSYOP from special operations active component PSYOP. Training between the two components differs according to the respective missions of each. Where reserve component PSYOP personnel rely on interpreter support to develop messaging, active component PSYOP personnel are required to support the execution of SOF core tasks based on learned and acquired language and cultural proficiency.

MISO planning draws from multiple sciences including sociology, psychology, linguistics, and anthropology "to ensure that relevant, timely, and effective messages are conveyed to foreign populations."¹³ Local or regional language dialect and cultural proficiency improves effective communication with target audiences (TAs).¹⁴ MISO doctrine repeatedly references the need for regional focus, cross-cultural skills, and foreign language proficiency to establish relationships with, and develop capabilities of, indigenous forces.¹⁵ Doctrine also emphasizes communicating with foreign populations in their native languages and dialects to achieve influence.¹⁶ An initial review of doctrinal literature clearly indicates a requirement for foreign language and cultural proficiency.

¹¹ Department of Defense, Joint Publication (JP) 3-13.2, *Military Information Support Operations (MISO)* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2015), I-2.

¹² Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-53, *Military Information Support Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2013), 1-2.

¹³ FM 3-53, *MISO*, 1-5.

¹⁴ FM 3-53, *MISO*, 1-7.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1-6.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1-9.

PSYOP personnel rely on foreign language proficiency, regional expertise, and cultural competence to shape the cognitive information environment commonly referred to as the human domain. The human domain “encompasses the totality of the physical, cultural, and social environments that influence human behavior.”¹⁷ PSYOP personnel plan and develop informative and influential messaging based on target audience (human domain) analysis conducted in phase two of the PSYOP planning process.¹⁸ All messages must be tailored to the particular language and culture of a specific target audience.¹⁹ Planning considerations for PSYOP personnel training include foreign language, culture, and region.²⁰ Foreign language and cultural expertise provide PSYOP personnel with the ability to gather and assess the TA’s attitudes toward U.S. and host nation government objectives—required for development of persuasive messages to influence anticipated behaviors.²¹ Foreign language proficiency, regional expertise, and cultural competence are critical skills for PSYOP personnel to effectively and accurately execute MISO.

Doctrine emphasizes the importance of foreign language, cultural, and regional studies to “provide Soldiers with the means to effectively communicate directly with TAs, and to train, advise, assist (TAA) or advise, assist, and accompany (AAA) host or partner nation forces.”²² Current institutional training at the special warfare center and school (SWCS) serves to provide a basic foundation of foreign language. “PSYOP Soldiers assigned to a [Military Information Support Group] MISG are trained in basic foreign language and culture of an assigned geographic region.”²³ Based on official documents, it is logical to infer that PSYOP personnel are assigned by geographic region to facilitate the foreign language and cultural proficiency through immersion related to

¹⁷ Department of the Army, TRADOC Pamphlet 535-3-0, *The U.S. Army Capstone Concept* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2009), 15.

¹⁸ Department of Defense, Field Manual (FM) 3-05.301, *Psychological Operations Process Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2007), 2-1.

¹⁹ FM 3-53, *MISO*, 3-9.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 4-2.

²¹ FM 3-53, *MISO*, 4-16.

²² *Ibid.*, 3-8.

²³ *Ibid.*, 3-8.

regionally specific operations. This inference is based on the admitted basic foreign language and cultural training of assigned personnel, regional assignment, and the previously discovered doctrinal references to foreign language, culture and regional proficiency.

Interpreter support is not a reliable replacement for foreign language proficiency among PSYOP personnel for a two primary reasons. In his congressional United States Institute of Peace report, Robert Perito remarks, “Interpreters ... were not [language and cultural] professionals and, in many cases had limited competency.”²⁴ Perito goes on to say, “Much of what the [provisional reconstruction teams] PRTs hoped to accomplish was literally lost in translation.”²⁵ The interpreters that Perito references represent that same pool of interpreters provided to support MISO. Additionally, Helmus, Paul, and Glenn of the RAND Corporation comment, “Translators and interpreters are an under resourced capability in maneuver and CA units and in IO and PA.”²⁶ Interpreter support should not be relied upon to supplant, but rather to augment foreign language proficiency among PSYOP personnel. Based on the aforementioned observations, interpreter support does not always equal success. Additionally, interpreters may not be available for every PSYOP mission. This is important, as face to face communication remains one of the most trusted forms of MISO, requiring foreign language proficiency at the PSYOP team level. Munoz summarizes that “the biggest PSYOP successes have been in the area of face-to-face communication and the new emphasis on meetings with jirgas (local councils of elders), key-leader engagements, and establishing individual relationships with members of the Afghan media.”²⁷

²⁴ Robert M. Perito, *U.S. Experience with Provisional Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan: Lessons Identified* (Special Report-152, October 2005) (New York: USIP), accessed December 13, 2016, <http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/sr152.pdf>, 12.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Todd C. Helmus, Christopher Paul, and Russell W. Glenn, *Enlisting Madison Avenue: The Marketing Approach to Earning Popular Support in Theaters of Operation* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2007), 44.

²⁷ Arturo Munoz, *U.S. Military Information Operations in Afghanistan: Effectiveness of Psychological Operations 2001–2010* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2012), xvi.

1. FOREIGN LANGUAGE GUIDANCE REVIEW

In February 2005, the DOD published the Defense Language Transformation Roadmap directing renewed investment in language skills to improve “organic capability in emerging languages and dialects” and achieve “greater competence and regional area skills in those languages and dialects.”²⁸ Additionally, in May 2008, the Under Secretary of Defense (USD) Personnel and Readiness (P&R) published Guidance for the Development of the Force 2010–2025 echoing the critical nature of language skills, regional expertise, and cultural capabilities and suggests the DOD:

increase foreign language skills and cultural knowledge capability and capacity by identifying and training military and civilian personnel with high aptitude to learn foreign languages, as well as military personnel who conduct irregular warfare, perform security, stabilization and reconstruction missions, work with coalition partners, or are involved in training and advising missions in regions of the world where English is not a spoken language.²⁹

DOD and USD (P&R) agree on the need for increased language proficiency to prepare for current and future conflict. These facts further support the author’s initial assumption that PSYOP personnel require advanced levels of foreign language and cultural proficiency to communicate with foreign populations to achieve U.S. and host nation government objectives through MISO.

The DOD utilizes the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) to determine foreign language proficiency. The ILR uses six standardized base skill levels ranging from zero, which represents no functional ability to five, which represents equivalency to an educated native speaker.³⁰ Table 3 illustrates the skill levels according to the following performance parameters; professional performance which occurs between

²⁸ Department of Defense, *Defense Language Transformation Roadmap* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2005), 1.

²⁹ Clifford L. Stanley, *Department of Defense Strategic Plan for Language Skill, Regional Expertise, and Cultural Capabilities 2011–2016*, USD (P&R) (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2011), 5.

³⁰ Martha Herzog, History, Interagency Language Roundtable, accessed November 8, 2014, <http://www.govtilr.org/Skills/IRL%20Scale%20History.htm>.

levels three to five (3 – 5), limited performance occurring between levels two and two plus (2 – 2+), minimal performance occurring between levels one and one plus (1 – 1+), and no performance occurring at level zero (0).³¹ According to ILR guidance, “skill levels are assigned based on an authorized language examination or test.”³² DOD currently uses the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT) and the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) to test the proficiency of personnel.

Table 3. ILR Skill Level Performance Descriptions³³

ILR Skill Level	Performance Rating
Level 5	Master Performance
Level 4+	Advanced Professional Performance Plus
Level 4	Advanced Professional Performance
Level 3+	Professional Performance Plus
Level 3	Professional Performance
Level 2+	Limited Working Performance Plus
Level 2	Limited Working Performance
Level 1+	Minimal Performance Plus
Level 1	Minimal Performance
Level 0	No Performance

Table 4 illustrates the functions and tasks that can be accomplished by personnel with corresponding proficiency levels. The table also identifies the scope of language performance expected and the relative conversational fluency perceived by a native speaker.

³¹ “ILR Skill Level Descriptions in Interpretation Performance,” Interagency Language Roundtable, accessed December 8, 2018, <http://www.govtilr.org/Skills/interpretationSLDsapproved.htm>.

³² “ILR Language Skill Level Descriptions,” Interagency Language Roundtable, accessed November 8, 2014, <http://www.govtilr.org/Skills/ILRscale4.htm>.

³³ Table was developed by the author to depict ILR skill level performance descriptions.

Table 4. Interagency Language Roundtable
Language Skill Level Descriptions³⁴

Level	Function/Tasks	Context/Topics	Accuracy
5	All expected of an educated Native Speaker	All subjects	Accepted as an educated Native Speaker (NS)
4	Tailor language, counsel, motivate, persuade, negotiate	Wide range of professional needs	Extensive, precise, and appropriate
3	Support opinions, hypothesize, explain, unfamiliar topics	Practical, abstract, special interests	Errors never interfere with communication
2	Narrate, describe, give directions	Concrete, real-world, factual	Intelligible even if not used to dealing with non NS
1	Simple question and Answer	Everyday survival	Intelligible with effort or practice
0+	Memorized	Very limited	Difficult to understand
0	None		

The CJCSI provides guidance for the Management of DOD language and regional proficiency capabilities, establishes language proficiency goals for foreign language professionals, and identifies foreign language and regional proficiency skill level guidelines.³⁵ CJCSI sets a DOD-wide ILR skill level goal of three (3) in listening, reading, and speaking. An ILR skill level three (3) correlates with professional performance. Individuals at this level possess the following characteristics:

[be] able to interpret consistently in the mode (simultaneous, consecutive, and sight) required by the setting, provide renditions of informal as well as some colloquial and formal speech with adequate accuracy, and normally meet unpredictable complications successfully. Can convey many nuances, cultural allusions, and idioms, though expression may not always reflect target language conventions. [Capable] of adequate delivery, with pleasant voice quality. Hesitations, repetitions or corrections may be noticeable but do not hinder successful communication of the message.

³⁴ CJCSI 3126.01A, *LREC Capability Identification, Planning, and Sourcing*, E-1.

³⁵ Department of Defense, Department of Defense Instruction (DODI) 5160.70, *Management of DOD Language and Regional Proficiency Capabilities* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2007), 1.

Can handle some specialized subject matter with preparation. Performance reflects high standards of professional conduct and ethics.³⁶

Currently, the standard for linguists and all Defense Language Institute (DLI) graduates is an ILR proficiency level of two (2) in listening, reading, and speaking, which correlates with limited working proficiency.³⁷ At this level,

individuals are unable to transfer information reliably in most instances. May communicate some meaning when exchanges are short, involve subject matter that is routine or discourse that is repetitive or predictable, but may typically require repetition or clarification. Expression in the target language is frequently faulty.³⁸

Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF), including Special Forces (SF), Psychological Operations (PO), and Civil Affairs (CA), are not categorized as linguists, yet they routinely use foreign language in the conduct of special operations core tasks, which universally require operating with and through foreign host and partner nations, their military and security personnel, and their respective populations.

According to DOD, “Cultural awareness and language training shall be embedded in accession training, professional military education, and pre-deployment training and integrated across the Total Force.”³⁹ Language, cultural, and regional proficiency is critical, enduring, and essential to DOD missions, and global mission readiness. DOD policy mandates that, “foreign language skills, regional expertise, and cultural capabilities are enduring critical competencies essential to the DOD mission and must be managed to maximize the accession, development, sustainment, enhancement, and employment of these critical skills to the DOD mission.”⁴⁰ Special emphasis on foreign

³⁶ “ILR Skill Level Descriptions in Interpretation Performance,” Interagency Language Roundtable, accessed December 8, 2018, <http://www.govtilr.org/Skills/interpretationSLDsapproved.htm>.

³⁷ Department of Defense, Army Regulation (AR) 11–6, *Army Foreign Language Training* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2009), 9.

³⁸ “ILR Skill Level Descriptions in Interpretation Performance,” Interagency Language Roundtable, accessed December 8, 2018, <http://www.govtilr.org/Skills/interpretationSLDsapproved.htm>.

³⁹ Department of Defense, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction (CJCSI) 1322.18, *Military Training* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2009), 3.

⁴⁰ DODD 5160.41E, *DLRECP*, 2.

language and cultural education is required in PSYOP accessions, training, professional military education, and pre-deployment training.

DOD delegates the management and establishment of language proficiency standards for ARSOF personnel to the USASOC.⁴¹ USASOC recognizes the importance of language proficiency, stating, “Language is a key component of ARSOF missions such as ... unconventional warfare (UW), foreign internal defense (FID), military information support operations (MISO), and civil affairs operations (CA) and requires the same training focus as other combat skills.”⁴² The U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS), hereby referred to as SWCS, is responsible for language acquisition training. The standard for all ARSOF personnel is currently an ILR proficiency level of one plus (1+) in listening and speaking.⁴³ According to ILR competency descriptions, individuals at this level of proficiency are “unable to transfer more than isolated short phrases.”⁴⁴ This indicates a significant gap between required and actual ILR levels of proficiency for PSYOP personnel.

Notably, ARSOF does not distinguish language proficiency requirements between the three ARSOF career management fields (CMFs) 18-SF, 37-PO (PSYOP), and 38-CA according to their respective core tasks and required critical skills. Each CMF routinely engages with foreign populations and senior level host nation and partner nation personnel in the execution of their respective core tasks. It is logical to conclude that each CMF should require personnel to possess working level of proficiency corresponding with ILR level of two (2) in listening, speaking, and reading. Analysis of the core tasks for SF, PSYOP, and CA reveals an actual need for an ILR proficiency level of three (3). CJCS recommends an ILR skill level of four (4) to “motivate, persuade, and negotiate;” all tasks that align with the objectives of MISO. Current ARSOF foreign language

⁴¹ DODD 5160.41E, *DLRECP*, 13.

⁴² Department of the Army, United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) Regulation 350–11, *Management of Individual Training Requirements and Resources for Army Special Operations Forces* (Fort Bragg, NC: USASOC Publishing Office, 1997), 13.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴⁴ “ILR Skill Level Descriptions in Interpretation Performance,” Interagency Language Roundtable, accessed December 8, 2018, <http://www.govtilr.org/Skills/interpretationSLDsapproved.htm>.

standards are insufficient for PSYOP personnel to achieve the intended effects of MISO through persuasive foreign language communicate.⁴⁵

2. CONCLUSION

The literature review indicates that foreign language, which requires cultural proficiency, is required for PSYOP personnel to effectively and accurately persuade foreign populations. Additionally, foreign language proficiency requirements for PSYOP personnel exceed current USASOC proficiency standards. The Department of Defense, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Office of the Secretary of Defense, emphasize the need for foreign language proficiency among all service members, with emphasis on language professionals. While PSYOP personnel are not categorized as language professionals, it is clear they cannot persuade foreign populations through communication without advanced levels of foreign language and cultural proficiency. Finally, empirical evidence reveals gaps between required and actual foreign language and cultural proficiency.

The current ARSOF acquisition model relies on initial acquisition training, operational experience and professional military education to increase proficiency. Deployment data reveals that current personnel and talent management practices prevent operationally based immersion to enable foreign language and cultural acquisition. Evidence suggests that current personnel management practices inhibit acquisition of language and cultural proficiency. Operational experience is not currently a reliable method for acquisition of advanced foreign language and cultural proficiency among PSYOP personnel. PSYOP personnel are often assigned counter-intuitively outside of the region for which they were trained, and rarely experience required immersion. The current PSYOP model of foreign language improvement does not facilitate the acquisition of advanced foreign language proficiency, as suggested in official documents.

⁴⁵ CJCSI 3126.01A, *LREC Capability Identification, Planning, and Sourcing*, E-1.

F. OVERVIEW

Chapter II delves into methods of development for communicative foreign language and cultural proficiency by exploring various approaches and methods. Approaches and methods are identified that enable the foreign language and cultural proficiency levels required for PSYOP personnel to persuade foreign populations through effective communication. Information gathered in this chapter is used to conceptualize an approach and method to improve PSYOP foreign language and cultural acquisition and proficiency.

Chapter III consists of three case studies into foreign language and cultural acquisition programs including the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS), Department of Defense (DOD) Foreign Area Officer (FAO), and Basic Special Operations Language Training (BSOLT). This chapter illustrates the extent to which immersion positively affects overall foreign language and cultural acquisition. Summaries of data obtained in this chapter contribute to the conceptualization of a method capable of consistently yielding advanced foreign language and cultural proficiency among PSYOP personnel.

Chapter IV culminates with a summary of conclusions derived from preceding chapters in this research project. Conclusions are used to formulate recommendations for an improved foreign language and cultural education and acquisition model for PSYOP personnel.

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II. DEVELOPING LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

The enculturation of an individual to a foreign body of customs will only be possible as he learns to speak and understand the foreign language and to respond with new selection and emphasis to the world around him—a selection and emphasis presented to him by this new culture.

—Ismael Silva-Fuenzalida⁴⁶

A. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the objective is to identify an approach and method that enables the acquisition of foreign-language and cultural proficiency levels required for PSYOP personnel to persuade foreign populations as part of the SOF core task MISO. I delve into methods for developing communicative foreign-language and cultural proficiency by exploring various philosophies of contemporary foreign-language education (FLED) and theories of second-language acquisition (SLA). Research into teaching and acquisition is used to identify an appropriate method of foreign language and cultural acquisition for PSYOP personnel.

B. SOCIOLINGUISTIC AND SOCIOCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Analysis of communication provides context for the underlying complexities inherent to language as an extension of culture and society. Research reveals a multitude of communication factors associated with the *setting*.⁴⁷ The setting is the communicative act or event that occurs at a particular time and place, under particular physical circumstances.⁴⁸ Examples include the way in which people speak and conduct themselves during formal occasions versus casual and festive social events or among family members as opposed to strangers or business associates. People tend to adjust their

⁴⁶ Ismael Silva-Fuenzalida, Ethnolinguistics and the Study of Culture, *American Anthropologist* 51, no. 3 (1949): PDF e-book, 446–56.

⁴⁷ Zdenek Salzman, James Stanlaw, and Nobuko Adachi, *Language, Culture, and Society: An Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology*, 6th ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2015), 270.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

language according to the setting in which they find themselves—assuming they are familiar with what is socially and culturally acceptable.

Sociology explains that each human group develops its own social and political structure in terms of culture and history to form a unique society.⁴⁹ Merriam and Webster define *society* as “an enduring and cooperating social group whose members have developed organized patterns of relationships through interaction with one another.”⁵⁰ Language and culture are the characteristics that make each society unique.⁵¹ While humans comprise the biosphere, language and culture comprise the *symbolosphere*. Sociologist Robert Logan defines the symbolosphere as, “a totally abstract, non-material symbolic domain.”⁵² One component of the symbolic domain, *semiotics*, is defined by Merriam and Webster as, “a general philosophical theory of signs and symbols that deals especially with their function in both artificially constructed and natural languages, which comprise syntactics, semantics, and pragmatics.”⁵³ According to Davis, in many ways, language and culture are akin to symbiotic parasites of their human hosts that “evolve by a process of descent, modification, and selection.”⁵⁴ Language and culture are dynamic and continuously evolving based on human perceptions of unique environmental stimuli and the adoption of new words in place of others—the result of interaction with contiguous cultures and languages.

The effects of social and cultural influence on language patterns are nuanced and often indiscernible. For example—among Germans it is customary to say “Guten Appetit”

⁴⁹ Sociology Guide, *Sociology Guide-A Students Guide to Sociology*, accessed May 6, 2016, <http://www.sociologyguide.com/basic-concepts/Society.php>.

⁵⁰ Merriam-Webster, *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed., s.v. “Society” (Springfield: Merriam-Webster Incorporated, 2003), 1184.

⁵¹ W. Davis, Vanishing Cultures, *National Geographic* 196, no. 2 (August 1999): PDF e-book, 62–89.

⁵² Robert K. Logan, *The Extended Mind: The Emergence of Language, the Human Mind, and Culture*, 1st ed. (University of Toronto Press, Scholarly Publishing Division, 2008), Epilogue.

⁵³ Merriam-Webster, s.v. “Semiotics,” accessed May 6, 2016, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/semiotics>.

⁵⁴ W. Davis, “Vanishing Cultures,” 62–89.

(enjoy your meal) to others at the table before eating lunch and dinner.⁵⁵ However, saying the same phrase at breakfast is culturally inappropriate. When addressing someone who is an elder or a stranger in German, it is customary to use formal vernacular. However, this custom changes depending on the occasion and the speaker's familial ties. It is customary to tap the bottoms of beer mugs against each other simultaneously exchanging the greeting "Prost" (cheers) with each other, followed by a tap of the mug on the table before drinking. Failing to do so is regarded as rude and unsociable. While these examples may seem rather innocuous, using the wrong form of a word during culturally specific occasions or failing to carry out socially acceptable practices can negatively affect communication and relationship building.

Evolution of language occurs in response to culture, society, and environment. For example, it is rare to find the word "you" in early English and classic literature and biblical text. Conversely, contemporary English rarely uses the classic informal forms of the word "you"—"thou, thee, thy, and thine." Yet, it is impossible to read the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible or Shakespeare's works without encountering these words.⁵⁶ The KJV version of the Lord's Prayer (Matt 6: 9–13) reads, "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name."⁵⁷ Research indicates a decline in the use of thou, thee, thy, and thine around the 14th century. Thou, thee, thy, and thine were all but forgotten by the 17th century.⁵⁸ This is evident in the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible and modern literature, both of which have adapted to simply using the words "you" and "your" in place of thou, thee, thy, and thine. The NIV version of the Lord's Prayer reads, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name."⁵⁹ While this example may not seem significant outside of religious settings, it proves the evolution of language and

⁵⁵ Personal observation made through the author's fourteen years of Germanic language and culture study.

⁵⁶ Stack Exchange, English Language and Usage, "Did English Ever Have a Formal Version of 'You'?" accessed May 6, 2016, <http://english.stackexchange.com/questions/9780/did-english-ever-have-a-formal-version-of-you>.

⁵⁷ Matthew 6:9 (King James Version).

⁵⁸ Stack Exchange, "Formal Version of 'You.'"

⁵⁹ Matthew 6:9 (New International Version).

culture over time—a phenomenon that is not atypical for language generally—and demonstrates that the symbolosphere (language) evolves through biosphere (human) adaptation.

Language and culture are symbiotic, and deeply engrained in communication within society. Merriam and Webster define *culture*, “the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior that depends upon the capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations.”⁶⁰ Scientific research and observation reveals the significance of sociocultural influence in language acquisition in children. Without formal instruction, most children learn the *morphology* (the forms of words), *phonology* (relationships among speech sounds), *syntax* (the arrangement of words and phrases to create well-formed sentences), and *semantics* (the meaning of a word, phrase, or sentence) of their mother’s language by age four through unstructured pragmatics.⁶¹ Observation of early childhood language development indicates that language acquisition is not simply imitating the language that a child hears through rote memorization. Children adapt their use of words continually through trial, error, and feedback from adults within their social group.⁶² Ochs’ and Schieffelin’s research supports this phenomenon as well.

The process of acquiring language is deeply affected by the process of becoming a competent member of society, and the process of becoming a competent member of society is realized to a large extent through language, by acquiring knowledge of its functions, social distribution, and interpretations in and across socially defined situations, i.e., through exchanges of language in particular social situations.⁶³

⁶⁰ Merriam and Webster, *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, Culture*, 11th ed. (Springfield: Merriam-Webster Incorporated, 2003), 304.

⁶¹ Salzmann, Stanlaw, and Adachi, *Language, Culture, and Society: An Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology*, 191.

⁶² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, *Speech and Language Developmental Milestones*, accessed May 6, 2016, <https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/speech-and-language>.

⁶³ Elinor Ochs and Bambi B. Schieffelin, *Linguistic Anthropology: A Reader* (Springfield: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 264.

It is then reasonable to conclude that foreign language acquisition requires some degree of immersion, which is an impossible process to replicate in a classroom environment or through textbook, video, or audio study, as these mediums cannot keep pace with symbolophoric evolution. Salzmann et al. further support this conclusion noting that, “Acquisition of language should not be studied without considering the sociocultural context in which it takes place.”⁶⁴ Salzmann et al. further underscore the importance of culture, “knowing how to use their native language effectively helps individuals cope with their culture, and learning to use it appropriately is an important part of enculturation (the process of learning one’s culture).”⁶⁵ Under this premise, immersion should carry significant emphasis in any language acquisition program if communicative proficiency is the objective.

Humans evolve through continuous adaptation to their surroundings. One such adaptation is the exchange of information and ideas, which occurs through complex culturally acceptable methods, including body language and casual conversation. According to Salzmann et al., this adaptation “establish[es] an atmosphere of sociability...referred to as *phatic communion*.”⁶⁶ British anthropologist Edward Taylor defines culture as, “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.”⁶⁷ While Taylor does not mention it specifically, language enables the passing of culture to successive generations acquired through socialization to ensure the continuance of societal norms.

Language and culture are dynamic in nature and continuously adapting according to how people interpret their world. This process is also influenced by *cultural drift*,

⁶⁴ Salzmann, Stanlaw, and Adachi, *Language, Culture, and Society: An Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology*, 208.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 270.

⁶⁷ Edward B. Taylor, *Primitive Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 1.

which occurs through interaction with languages and culture of contiguous societies.⁶⁸ Robert Logan theorizes language and culture are the result of the social evolution of hominids.⁶⁹ Essentially, early humans developed speech in response to the evolution of “social organization (or the language of social interaction), and preverbal communication, which entails the use of hand signals, mime, gesture, and prosodic vocalization.”⁷⁰ Logan’s research indicates that “tropical people have no words for ice and snow, temperate zone people have few, and the Inuit have many.”⁷¹ This example demonstrates the extent to which environment and culture can influence language as well. Language and culture are both products of the environment in which people find themselves. Logan concludes, “Language and communicative skills are part of culture. Language is a cultural phenomenon and culture is grounded in language. It, therefore, should be no surprise...to learn that language and culture have co-evolved.”⁷² Language and culture are fluid in nature, and intertwined elements that simultaneously evolve in response to continuous environmental and social development and change.

Children are able to comprehend and conceptualize the use of sounds, rules, and word forms to the point they can say things and develop sentences about things that they have never heard spoken previously—without the benefit of formal teaching and grammar instruction.⁷³ The *natural method* of language and culture acquisition observed in children enables them to go from zero words to full language capacity in roughly three years while passively acquiring sociolinguistic and sociocultural proficiency. The natural method of acquiring language helps to characterize the sociocultural deficiencies associated with classroom-based second or foreign language acquisition. As previously discussed, children learn to speak their socially accepted languages between the ages of

⁶⁸ Ajay Bhatt, *What Are the Important Functions of Culture ?*, accessed May 2, 2016, <http://www.preservearticles.com/201101173456/important-functions-of-culture.html>.

⁶⁹ Robert K. Logan, *The Extended Mind: The Emergence of Language, the Human Mind, and Culture*, 1st ed. (University of Toronto Press, Scholarly Publishing Division, 2008), 5.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 173.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*

three and four—typically before they learn to read. Based on this premise, there is no requirement for grammar instruction to facilitate sociocultural and sociolinguistic acquisition.

Classroom instruction seeks to achieve linguistic competence, but fails to provide knowledge of [the functions of language], social distribution, and interpretations in and across socially defined situations.⁷⁴ It is reasonable to establish foundational knowledge of language in a classroom environment as part of a broader language acquisition model; however, it is necessary to consider the vast array of dialects associated with languages in addition to the sociocultural and sociolinguistic aspects. While it is possible to transmit a message using a formal language dialect such as Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), Oxford English, or Castilian Spanish, it is highly probable that the native receiver will respond in his or her local dialect and vernacular. It has also been established that language dialects evolve over time resulting from cultural drift. There are currently twelve primary dialects and countless sub-dialects in Arabic and one hundred primary dialects and forty-four sub-dialects in English.⁷⁵ Acquisition of dialects, as previously discussed in early childhood development, occurs through participant observation of sociocultural and sociolinguistic norms associated with repeated interaction and pragmatics.

Analysis of language and cultural acquisition from infancy into adulthood reveals a strong connection to passive intuition versus active comprehension. It is logical to conclude that there is an inextricable relationship between language and culture based on their mutual importance in society. Moreover, sociocultural and sociolinguistic proficiency appear to correlate with immersion within a specific society and therefore enable acquisition and proficiency.

⁷⁴ Ochs and Schieffelin, *Linguistic Anthropology: A Reader*, 264.

⁷⁵ Rick Aschmann, *North American English Dialects, Based on Pronunciation Patterns*, accessed May 20, 2016, <http://aschmann.net/AmEng/#DialectDescriptionChart>.

C. CLASSICAL LANGUAGE LEARNING

The grammar translation (GT) method of language learning, also known as the classical method, the Prussian method, or the Ciceronian method, focuses entirely on learning grammar to facilitate reading and writing.⁷⁶ This method does not emphasize communicative (speaking and listening) competence. The principles listed below reflect the most widely based method of instruction in most collegiate level textbooks.⁷⁷ Traditional grammar teaching associated with GT is necessary to acquire the rules of grammar, but students are not able to use the rules in a manner consistent with improving communication skills.⁷⁸ Richards and Rogers distill GT down to seven basic principles.

1. The goal of foreign language study is to learn a language in order to read its literature or in order to benefit from the mental discipline and intellectual development that results from foreign language study. Grammar Translation views language learning as consisting of little more than memorizing rules and facts in order to understand and manipulate the morphology and syntax of the foreign language.
2. Reading and writing are the major focus with little or no systematic attention given to speaking or listening.
3. Reading texts determined vocabulary selection, and words are taught through bilingual word lists, dictionary study, and memorization.
4. The sentence is the basic unit of teaching and language practice. Translating sentences into and out of the target language comprises much of the lesson, and it is this focus on the sentence that is a distinctive feature of the method.
5. Emphasis is placed on grammatical accuracy.
6. Grammar teaching is deductive—that is, by presentation and study of grammar rules, practice of grammar occurs through translation exercises.

⁷⁶ Nitish Mondal, *A Comparative Study of Grammar Translation Method and Communicative Approach in Teaching English Language*, *New York Science Journal* 5, no. 5 (2012): PDF e-book, 87.

⁷⁷ J. C. Richards and Theodore S Rodgers, *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 7.

⁷⁸ Nitish Mondal, *A Comparative Study of Grammar Translation Method and Communicative Approach in Teaching English Language*, 86.

7. The student's native language is the medium of instruction for explanation new items, and to enable comparisons to between the foreign language and the student's native language.⁷⁹

Nitish Mondal claims, "The traditional [classical] grammar teaching has its disadvantages which prevent the students from developing their communicative competence."⁸⁰ The reasons given for why GT prevents communicative competence include the fact that it is a teacher-centered method, thereby preventing open dialogue and exercise of linguistic skills. Teacher-led lectures are characteristic of GT classes. Under these circumstances, students primarily focus on note taking. Rote memorization is the main method for learning grammar and vocabulary in addition to written exercises and translating between the student's first and second language. Verbal communication is not the goal of the GT method—making it incompatible for achieving the communicative proficiency requirements of PSYOP personnel.

GT language learning is situational-based instruction that emphasizes grammar, translation, and memorization. The situational based method receives criticism from prominent American linguist Noam Chomsky, who argues, "The current standard structural theories of language [are] incapable of accounting for the fundamental characteristic of language—the creativity and uniqueness of individual sentences."⁸¹ According to author and linguist A. P Howatt, language learning requires "a closer study of the language itself and a return to the traditional concept that utterances [carry] meaning in themselves and [express] the meanings and intention of the speakers and writers who [create] them."⁸² Based on Howatt's conclusion, language is more than simply words connected via grammatical rules. Language is the social and cultural significance expressed through the communicative utterances that comprise language.

⁷⁹ Richards and Rogers, *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*, 6–7.

⁸⁰ Mondal, *A Comparative Study of Grammar Translation Method and Communicative Approach in Teaching English Language*, 86.

⁸¹ Richards and Rogers, *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*, 153.

⁸² A. P. R. Howatt and H. G. Widdowson, *A History of English Language Teaching*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 280.

Howatt describes what he calls “strong” and “weak” versions of communicative language teaching:

There is in a sense, a “strong” version of the communicative approach and a “weak” version. The weak version which has become more or less standard practice in the last ten years, stresses the importance of providing learners with opportunities to use their English for communicative purposes and, characteristically, attempts to integrate such activities into a wider program of language teaching...The “strong” version of communicative teaching, on the other hand, advances the claim that language is acquired through communication, so that it is not merely a question of activating an existing but inert knowledge of the language, but stimulating the development of the language system itself. If the former could be described as “learning to use” English, the latter entails “using English to learn it.”⁸³

Howatt and Chomsky both conclude that the foundation of language acquisition must derive from communicative utility rather than grammatical principles to develop “communicative competence” in foreign language.⁸⁴

D. COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

Mondal offers an alternative method, which underscores the importance of a communicative approach to second-language acquisition. The method proposed emphasizes student-to-student and student-to-teacher language use related to tasks in the lesson. The goal is to shift learning from linguistic competencies to communicative competencies. This method, known as communicative language teaching (CLT), “presupposes that language always occurs in a social context, and it should not be divorced from context when it is being taught.”⁸⁵ Based on Mondal’s research, language proficiency includes the ability to communicate while observing grammatical, sociolinguistic, and sociocultural competencies. Achieving the sociolinguistic competencies associated with CLT requires an alternative approach to foreign language

⁸³ Howatt and Widdowson, *A History of English Language Teaching*, 279.

⁸⁴ Dell H. Hymes, John Bernard Pride, and Janet Holmes, *On Communicative Competence* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971), 269–293.

⁸⁵ Mondal, *A Comparative Study of Grammar Translation Method and Communicative Approach in Teaching English Language*, 86.

learning and teaching. This approach places the teacher in a facilitator capacity for communicative language acquisition with emphasis on “learning by doing” and “the experience approach.”⁸⁶ CLT emphasizes language learning to achieve communicative proficiency.

CLT originated in response to the growing need for foreign language communicative proficiency among European populations for commerce in the late 1960s.⁸⁷ CLT does not follow a specific method. It is merely an approach to language learning that focuses on learning a foreign language by using it to communicate versus simply studying vocabulary and grammar. Richards and Rogers claim, “Authentic and meaningful communication should be the goal of classroom activities.”⁸⁸ CLT focuses on developing fluency through the integration of various language competencies, also referred to as skills. The CLT method views language learning “as a process of creative construction and involves trial and error.”⁸⁹ Johnson and Johnson list the resulting methodology since the inception of CLT:

1. *Appropriateness*: Language use reflects the situations of its use and must be appropriate to that situation depending on the setting, the roles of the participants, and the purpose of the communication, for example. Thus, learners may need to be able to use formal as well as casual styles of speaking.
2. *Message focus*: Learners need to be able to create and understand messages, that is, real meanings. Hence the focus on information sharing and information transfer in CLT activities.
3. *Psycholinguistic processing*: CLT activities seek to engage learners in the use of cognitive and other processes that are important factors in second language acquisition.
4. *Risk taking*: Learners are encouraged to make guesses and learn from their errors. By going beyond what they have been taught, they are encouraged to employ a variety of communication strategies.

⁸⁶ Gordon H. Bower and Ernest R. Hilgard, *Theories of Learning* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1981), PDF e-book.

⁸⁷ Richards and Rogers, *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*, 153–155.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 172.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

5. *Free practice:* CLT encourages the use of “holistic practice” involving the simultaneous use of a variety of sub skills, rather than practicing individual skills one piece at a time.⁹⁰

PSYOP personnel attending the Basic Special Operations Language Training (BSOLT) experience a mix of CLT and GT to advance their language learning in a compressed amount of time. However, as discussed in Chapter I, there are no cultural immersion opportunities associated with BSOLT to facilitate acquisition of advanced levels of foreign language proficiency for communicative purposes.

E. CONCLUSION

Research supports using the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach and emphasizing proficiency in speaking versus reading and writing. Language and culture are not autonomous systems that emerged independent of external factors. Rather, they are inextricably intertwined social entities that evolve with respect to the forces of selection imposed by humans. Language and culture can be likened to evolutionary products of human interaction with other humans and their environment. Analysis of data in this chapter supports the conclusion that a foreign language acquisition program must include immersion to facilitate acculturation, as culture is inextricably intertwined into language.

⁹⁰ Keith Johnson and Helen Johnson, *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Applied Linguistics: A Handbook for Language Teaching* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 68–73.

III. LANGUAGE AND CULTURE ACQUISITION (LCA)

Today's operating environment demands a much greater degree of language and regional expertise requiring years, not weeks, of training and education, as well as a greater understanding of the factors that drive social change.

—Robert Gates⁹¹

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines existing foreign language acquisition programs in three case studies. Each case study identifies the length of classroom (academic) study, length of immersion (culture) study, program cost, and resulting qualitative proficiency scores. Each program is unique in its use of grammar translation versus communicative language teaching methods of foreign language and cultural acquisition.

Resulting analysis illustrates the extent to which immersion positively affects overall foreign language acquisition and proficiency. Summaries of data obtained in this chapter contribute to the development of a foreign language and cultural acquisition model that enables the acquisition of required levels of proficiency to persuade foreign populations with effective communication as part of the SOF core task MISO.

B. ORIENTATION

The comparison of data between three case studies is the objective of this chapter. Data obtained in these case studies differ based on the assessments used by each organization. For example, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints case study references the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) guidelines for proficiency.⁹² The Special Warfare Center and School (SWCS) and the foreign area officer (FAO) reference the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR)

⁹¹ Robert Gates, *Quadrennial Defense Review* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2012), 29.

⁹² American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012* (Alexandria, VA: ACTFL, 2012), <https://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/actfl-proficiency-guidelines-2012>.

guidelines for proficiency.⁹³ The ACTFL is a description-based competency scale, while the ILR is a number-based competency scale. Table 5 serves to align the two scales, as both are referenced throughout this chapter.

Table 5. ILR/ACTFL Rating Comparison

ACTFL	Novice	Intermediate	Advanced	Superior	Distinguished
ILR	1 to 1+	2 to 2+	3 to 3+	4 to 4+	5

C. CASE STUDY # 1 – LDS LANGUAGE AND CULTURE ACQUISITION

In this case study, I analyze the Church of Jesus Christ Latter-day Saints’ (LDS) foreign language and culture acquisition program based on the program’s unique emphasis on short-term classroom instruction followed by long-term immersion. Additionally, I explore statistical data to determine the overall effect this method has on foreign language and culture acquisition. Data derived from this case study are used for comparison against others in this project.

1. ROLE OF THE LDS MISSIONARY

LDS missionaries seek to proselytize the Mormon faith through religious discussions with host populations in their languages. Accomplishing this task requires excellent proficiency in the language and culture of the host population.⁹⁴ Early Mormon Leader and President Brigham Young advises,

We [Mormons] should be familiar with the various languages, for we wish to send [missionaries] to the different nations and to the islands of the sea. ... We also wish them [missionaries] to understand the geography, habits, customs, and laws of nations and kingdoms.⁹⁵

⁹³ “ILR Skill Level Descriptions in Interpretation Performance,” Interagency Language Roundtable, accessed December 8, 2018, <http://www.govtilr.org/Skills/interpretationSLDsapproved.htm>.

⁹⁴ Lynne Hansen, *Second Language Acquisition Abroad: The LDS Missionary Experience* (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publication Company, 2012), 14.

⁹⁵ George Q Cannon, ed., *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 8 (London: Latter-day Saints’ Book Depot, April 1860), 39–43.

The Mormon Church has been committed to achieving Young's objectives through the establishment of several missionary training centers (MTC) worldwide. MTCs are consistently successful in teaching LDS missionaries foreign languages in a relatively compressed timeframe. Classroom instruction for missionaries ranges between eight weeks for category one language such as Spanish, and eleven weeks for a category four language such as Chinese. By comparison, it takes sixty-four weeks of classroom study at the Defense Language Institute to learn Chinese. The MTC program has proven so effective that government agencies have sought approval for personnel to learn at the facilities, or pay for MTC instructors to teach at locations such as the Foreign Service Institute and the Utah National Guard Intelligence School.⁹⁶

There are sixteen MTCs worldwide that prepare missionaries for the task of communicating and proselyting in several non-English speaking nations. MTCs currently train more than 27,000 missionaries every year, including more than 10,000 learning one of forty-seven different languages.⁹⁷ Missionary costs vary by location for example, in London, England South, costs average \$4,020 per month, while in Cusco, Peru, costs average \$1,330 per month.⁹⁸

2. HOW LDS MISSIONARIES ARE TRAINED

Prior to commencing duty in their assigned countries, missionaries receive basic foreign language instruction at an MTC. The length of classroom study varies according to assigned language difficulty level. Missionary classroom study for Spanish, French, and German is eight weeks in length and study for Korean and Chinese is eleven weeks. Classroom study at the MTC constitutes the totality of missionary foreign language classroom instruction prior to embarking on one's assigned mission.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ North Carolina Public Radio, All Things Considered, *Lessons From the Language Boot Camp for Mormon Missionaries*, accessed August 24, 2016, <http://www.npr.org/2014/06/07/319805068/lessons-from-the-language-boot-camp-for-mormon-missionaries>.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Lynn Arave, Standard Examiner, *Top 10: Most/least expensive LDS Church missions*, accessed December 12, 2016, <http://www.standard.net/Faith/2014/12/28/Most-least-expensive-LDS-Church-missions>.

⁹⁹ Hansen, *Second Language Acquisition Abroad: The LDS Missionary Experience*, 23.

MTCs divide incoming missionaries into districts consisting of between ten and twelve students. Students live with and attend classes with other members of their district throughout their tenure at the MTC. While living and learning at the MTC, missionary students perform all daily activities within their respective districts, communicating solely in their assigned foreign languages.¹⁰⁰ The purpose of foreign language acquisition is to enable proselyting through face-to-face communication covering religious texts with indigenous populations. Daily classes are typically eight hours in length, emphasizing purpose-based language learning.

Upon completion of language instruction, students move to their country of mission with basic foreign language skills obtained through between 240 hours and 330 hours of classroom instruction, depending on the numbers of weeks of classroom instruction.¹⁰¹ Proselyting and continuous immersion experienced through daily mission duty ensures interaction and acculturation. This enables missionaries to acquire proficiency in foreign language, local dialect, and culture. Missionaries routinely spend twenty-two months in their country of mission. Missionaries typically converse with foreign populations in their language eleven hours daily. This equates to roughly 2,560 and 3,840 hours of foreign language immersion and acquisition through interactive mission duty.¹⁰² Total classroom and immersion investment is between 2,800 and 4,170 hours.

In her research, Brigham Young University graduate and former missionary, Lynne Hansen tested the proficiency of a sample population of LDS missionaries one to three years after completing their mission duty.¹⁰³ With minimal classroom study and extended immersion, missionary students achieved advanced levels of foreign language proficiency on the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI).

¹⁰⁰ Hansen, *Second Language Acquisition Abroad: The LDS Missionary Experience*, 23.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 34.

The OPI assigns proficiency based on communicative competence and serves as an appropriate metric for foreign language verbal proficiency. The OPI rates proficiency within five major levels consisting of distinguished (D), superior (S), advanced (A), intermediate (I), and novice (N) with three sub-levels consisting of high (H), medium (M), and low (L). A distinguished speaker possesses near native fluency, while a novice speaker lacks the ability to maintain a basic conversation. For example, a speaker with advanced-high proficiency would be represented as AH.

Hansen's research, depicted in Table 6, suggests that immersion advances foreign language and culture acquisition. Hansen's study reveals that attainment of superior proficiency occurs after two years of immersion through missionary work. This trend occurs regardless of language difficulty. For example, Mandarin and Japanese are both considered category three languages. Category three languages are considered to be among the most difficult to learn. Yet, seventy-one percent of all Mandarin assigned missionaries and fifty-two percent of all Japanese assigned missionaries achieved advanced levels of proficiency. All missionaries tested achieved proficiency ratings higher than the novice level regardless of language difficulty. Only seven percent of the combined sample population scored below the advanced range of proficiency.

Table 6. Missionary Scores by Language (percentages)¹⁰⁴

	Spanish	French	German	Italian	Russian	Mandarin	Japanese	All languages
S	8%	15%	0%	14%	4%	4%	0%	6%
AH	31%	40%	35%	57%	25%	21%	14%	29%
AM	53%	40%	40%	29%	56%	42%	38%	51%
AL	5%	5%	25%	0%	11%	8%	0%	7%
IH	2%	0%	0%	0%	3%	25%	43%	6%
IM	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%	1%
IL	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
NH	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
NM	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
NL	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

¹⁰⁴ Hansen, *Second Language Acquisition Abroad: The LDS Missionary Experience*, 36.

Hansen's findings demonstrate the extent to which immersion enables LDS missionaries to become competent members of the societies they wish to proselytize. Resultant OPI scores illustrate how immersion consistently results in the acquisition of advanced levels of foreign language proficiency. Table 7 summarizes of the criteria for this case study.

Table 7. LDS Program Criteria Summary

Classroom	Immersion	Cost	Average Proficiency
8 to 11 weeks or 240 to 330 hrs	96 to 104 weeks or 2,560 to 3,840 hrs	\$24,120.00 to \$88,440.00	ACTFL: Advanced Medium ILR: 3/3

3. SUMMARY

The LDS foreign language acquisition program is highly successful based on the proficiency levels achieved by returning missionaries. The classroom portion of the LDS foreign language program is not tested to determine the level of proficiency achieved after 240 to 330 hours of missionary and language studies. However, the 2,560 to 3,840 hours of immersion appears to have a profound impact on foreign language and cultural acquisition. This case study also indicates that extended classroom study is not required for communicative competence. Additionally, the proficiency levels achieved by missionaries suggest that acculturation plays a significant role in foreign language acquisition beyond the intermediate level.

D. CASE STUDY # 2 – FAO LANGUAGE AND CULTURE ACQUISITION

In this case study, I analyze the Foreign Area Officer (FAO) foreign language and culture acquisition program. I provide an overview of the program's unique emphasis on long-term classroom instruction followed by long-term immersion. Additionally, I explore statistical records to determine the overall effect of this method on foreign language and culture acquisition. Data derived from this case study assists is used for comparison against others in this project.

1. ROLE OF THE FOREIGN AREA OFFICER

According to the Army's FAO website, "Army Foreign Area Officers are regionally focused experts in political-military operations with advanced language skills, cultural understanding, and the ability to advise senior military and civilian strategic decision-makers in an era of persistent conflict."¹⁰⁵ The Department of Defense (DOD)'s policy states Foreign Area Officers (FAOs) must "possess a unique combination of strategic focus, regional expertise (including cultural awareness and foreign language proficiency), and professional military skills and experiences that are critical competencies essential to the DOD mission."¹⁰⁶ The DOD recognizes that cultural awareness "is a subset of regional expertise that includes language, religion, norms, values, beliefs, behaviors, gestures, attitudes, etc."¹⁰⁷ The DOD categorizes FAOs as language professionals and assigns them a universal goal of achieving an ILR proficiency rating of three (3) in listening, reading, and speaking. Finally, FAO policy stipulates that graduate-level education in history, politics, military and security, culture, sociology, economics, and geography of their assigned countries and regions is required.

2. HOW FOREIGN AREA OFFICERS ARE TRAINED

The current Joint FAO Program was written in response to Department of Defense Instruction (DODI) 1315.17, which assigns policies and responsibilities governing FAO programs in the military departments. Components of FAO education include graduate studies (known as Advanced Civil Schooling, or ACS), language training (at either the Defense Language Institute (DLI) in Monterey, California or DLI-

¹⁰⁵ United States Army Human Resources Command, Officer Personnel Management Directorate, Active Duty FAO Accessions Public-Foreign Area Officer Assignments Branch FA48, *Foreign Area Officer (FA48) Overview*, accessed April 12, 2016, <https://www.hrc.army.mil/OPMD/Homepage%20-%20Foreign%20Area%20Officer%20Assignments%20Branch%20FA48>.

¹⁰⁶ Department of Defense Instruction (DODI) 1315.20, *Management of Department of Defense (DOD) Foreign Area Officer (FAO)* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, September 28, 2007), 3.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

Washington, DC, and In-Region Training (IRT).¹⁰⁸ Total investment into FAO training is approximately three years and \$86,000 to \$274,000.¹⁰⁹

The FAO foreign language acquisition program is designed to enable advanced levels of foreign-language cultural proficiency by incorporating extended classroom instruction, extended immersion, and advanced civilian schooling. The total investment into the FAO training program is approximately three years, depending on time spent at DLI for foundational language instruction. FAOs must graduate from DLI with and maintain an ILR of two (2) in listening, reading, and speaking, complete IRT, and complete graduate level education prior to their first operational or utilization assignments.

Language training consists of between twenty-six and sixty-four weeks or 1,040 to 2,560 hours of classroom language instruction at DLI. Every DLI graduate is required to achieve an ILR two (2) in listening, reading, and speaking. The duration of foreign language instruction depends on language difficulty. Category I languages, consisting of French, Portuguese, and Spanish, are twenty-six weeks in length. Category II languages, consisting of German and Indonesian, are thirty-five weeks in length. Category III languages, consisting of Hebrew, Hindi, Persian Farsi, Russian, Serbian/Croatian, Tagalog, Turkish, and Urdu, are forty-eight weeks in length. Category IV languages—consisting of Modern Standard Arabic, Arabic dialects of Egyptian, Iraqi, Levantine, and Sudanese; Mandarin Chinese; Japanese; Korean; and Pashto—are sixty-four weeks in length.¹¹⁰

IRT is the portion of the FAO program that immerses the officer in the local language and culture of one's regional concentration. IRT duration varies according to service component, for example; Army and Marine Corps—twelve months; Air Force—six months; and Navy—four months. The individual officer is responsible for tailoring

¹⁰⁸ Naval Postgraduate School, Transcript, Introduction to the Foreign Area Officer's Program, accessed April 12, 2016, [https://myfao.nps.edu/access/content/group/cb5fae36-035c-4361-b939-0fda6c5c0179/documents/Introduction to the Foreign Area Officers Program Transcript.pdf](https://myfao.nps.edu/access/content/group/cb5fae36-035c-4361-b939-0fda6c5c0179/documents/Introduction%20to%20the%20Foreign%20Area%20Officers%20Program%20Transcript.pdf).

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Naval Postgraduate School, Transcript, Introduction to the Foreign Area Officer's Program.

his or her program of instruction, which includes self-study, regional travel, and a series of internships at regional embassies.¹¹¹ IRT exists to enable acquisition of regional expertise through foreign language use and acculturation. IRT also exposes officers to a host of on-the-job training (OJT) opportunities by allowing them to gain military-to-military experience with host nation forces in the region, security assistance activities, defense attaché activities, and embassy office administration. In addition to OJT, FAOs establish military contacts and expand their foreign language military vocabulary. Other OJT-related outcomes include familiarity with local and regional politics, economics, commerce, agriculture, laws, etc.¹¹²

Army FAOs can elect to complete a master's degree in area studies with sixty percent of classes focused on their individual area of concentration (AOC). However, FAOs must continue language studies while pursuing their advanced degrees. Additionally, FAOs are encouraged to leverage all continuing education (CE) opportunities to maintain their language proficiency to include mobile training teams (MTTs) consisting of one-week to three-month refresher courses. FAOs are also encouraged to attend resident courses at DLI that include between eighteen and forty-seven weeks of intermediate and advanced level language courses.

Table 8 illustrates the statistical analysis of FAO foreign language proficiency indicating near equal distribution between advanced and intermediate. The sample depicted reveals that twelve percent possess novice proficiency, forty-three percent possess intermediate proficiency, and forty-two percent possess advanced to novice proficiency.

¹¹¹ Naval Postgraduate School, Transcript, Introduction to the Foreign Area Officer's Program.

¹¹² Ibid.

Table 8. FAO Scores by Language (percentages)¹¹³

	Spanish	French	German	Italian	Russian	Mandarin	Japanese	All languages
S	1%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	1%
AH	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%
AM	74%	5%	36%	37%	12%	18%	39%	38%
AL	0%	2%	0%	2%	3%	31%	10%	4%
IH	4%	14%	15%	7%	33%	33%	32%	18%
IM	15%	36%	20%	19%	31%	10%	6%	21%
IL	0%	0%	0%	7%	12%	0%	3%	4%
NH	5%	39%	24%	16%	5%	6%	6%	10%
NM	0%	5%	5%	12%	1%	2%	3%	2%
NL	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%

All FAOs receive foreign language training at DLI. DLI requires that all students achieve no less than an ILR proficiency level of two, equivalent to the ACTFL intermediate level. DLI graduation data for FAOs could not be obtained for this research. Further analysis between DLI scores and end of program scores is recommended.

Foreign language proficiency data obtained from the FAO branch suggest that long-term classroom acquisition and long-term immersion advances foreign language and culture acquisition. Data reveal that attainment of advanced proficiency occurs after one year of immersion through various embassy duties. This trend appears to occur regardless of language difficulty. For example, Mandarin and Japanese are both considered category four languages. Category IV languages such as Mandarin and Japanese are among the most difficult to learn, yet forty-nine percent of all FAOs assigned these languages achieved advanced levels proficiency. Only twelve percent of the combined sample population scored below the intermediate range of proficiency.

¹¹³ ILR scores derived from DLPT data received directly from FAO branch. ILR proficiency scores are translated to ACTFL proficiency scores for congruency.

3. SUMMARY

Table 9 reveals that with 720 to 1880 hours of classroom instruction and approximately 2,080 hours of immersion, the FAO foreign language acquisition program is capable of yielding ILR proficiency levels ranging between two (2) and three (3) in listening, reading, and speaking. Total investment for this return is between \$80,000 and \$247,000 depending upon the location for in IRT.

Table 9. FAO Program Criteria Summary

Classroom	Immersion	Cost	Observed Proficiency
18 to 47 weeks or 720 to 1,880 hours	52 weeks or 2,080 hours	\$86,000.00 to \$247,000.00	ACTFL: Intermediate High to Advance Medium ILR: 2+/2+ to 3+/3

E. CASE STUDY # 3 –PSYOP LANGUAGE AND CULTURE ACQUISITION

In this case study, I analyze the special operations forces (SOF) psychological operations (PSYOP) foreign language and culture acquisition program. I provide an overview of the program's unique emphasis on long-term classroom instruction. Additionally, I explore statistical records to determine the overall effect of this method on foreign language and culture acquisition. Data derived from this case study are used for comparison against others in this project.

1. ROLE OF PSYOP PERSONNEL

PSYOP personnel must be capable of communicating with host populations. Communication must mirror the language, dialect, and culture of the target audience to attain influence capable of achieving U.S. objectives. PSYOP personnel rely on advanced cultural knowledge and foreign language proficiency to leverage meaningful actions, symbols, practices, and behaviors.

2. HOW PSYOP PERSONNEL ARE TRAINED

The U.S. Army's John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS), or (SWCS), at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, manages and resources professional growth for PSYOP personnel.¹¹⁴ The Special Warfare Education Group (SWEG) administers the Foreign Language Initial Acquisition Program (FLIAP) also referred to as Basic Special Operations Language Training (BSOLT). SWEG develops and administers all BSOLT classes at an average cost of \$8,000 per student.¹¹⁵ BSOLT is intended to bring SOF personnel to an ILR proficiency level of one (1) in listening, reading, and speaking. All BSOLT graduates are assessed using the OPI.¹¹⁶ An ILR score of one corresponds with elementary language proficiency. Immersion is not a part of the BSOLT model.

Basic Special Operations Language Training (BSOLT) at SWCS is twenty-five weeks or 1,008 hours in length.¹¹⁷ Students attending BSOLT are exposed to the relationship between languages and the “physical and social systems, economics, politics and security, infrastructure and technology information, culture and regional studies.”¹¹⁸ Additionally, BSOLT “instruction focuses on functional application geared towards mission-related tasks, enhanced rapport building techniques, cultural mitigation strategies, interpreting and control of interpreter methods.”¹¹⁹ BSOLT provides instruction in three basic language skills: listening, reading, and speaking. Table 10 illustrates the 14 languages currently offered at BSOLT.¹²⁰ Table 10 also suggests a lack

¹¹⁴ Special Warfare Center and School, *About SWCS*, accessed November 19, 2013, <http://www.soc.mil/swcs/about.html>.

¹¹⁵ Cost per student information obtained through correspondence with the language director at SWEG

¹¹⁶ Department of the Army, USASOC Regulation 350–11, *Management of Individual Training Requirements and Resources for Army Special Operations Forces*, 4.

¹¹⁷ Department of the Army, *USAJFKSWCS Course Catalog, FY 2016* (Fort Bragg, NC: USASOC Publishing Office, 2016), PDF e-book, 54.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ *USAJFKSWCS Course Catalog, FY 2016*, 46.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 46.

of several dialects in the languages offered, which can significantly hinder effective communication.

Table 10. BSOLT Languages and Course Numbers¹²¹

Language	Course Number	Language	Course Number
Pashto-Afghan	2E-F219/011-F90 (PV)	Modern Standard Arabic	2E-F121/011-F36 (AD)
Dari	2E-F216/011-F87 (PG)	French	2E-F120/011-F35 (FR)
Indonesian	2E-F212/011-F83 (JN)	Russian	2E-F118/011-F33 (RU)
Chinese-Mandarin	2E-F214/011-F85 (CM)	Spanish	2E-F117/011-F32 (QB)
Tagalog	2E-F125/011-F40 (TG)	Thai	2E-F215/011-F86 (TH)
Persian Farsi	2E-F122/011-F37 (PF)	Korean	2E-F115/011-F30 (KP)
Urdu	2E-F267/011-F106 (UR)	Portuguese-Brazilian	2E-F124-011-F39 (PT)

Table 11 illustrates statistical data of PSYOP OPI scores upon graduation from BSOLT. Foreign language proficiency data obtained from SWCS reveal that after twenty-five weeks of classroom instruction sixty-six percent of PSYOP personnel achieve novice proficiency, thirty-two percent achieve intermediate proficiency, and one percent achieve advanced proficiency.

Table 11. BSOLT Oral Proficiency Interview Data¹²²

CMF	Students Tested	OPI Scoring	SF 18	Pass Rate	PSYOPS 37	Pass Rate	Civil Affairs 38	Pass Rate
Student Company	611	1/1 New Standar	12	1.96%	13	5.68%	8	3.25%
Civil Affairs	246	1./1.	52	8.51%	21	9.17%	26	10.57%
PYOPS	229	1+/1+	361	59.08%	118	51.53%	108	43.90%
	0	2./2	156	25.53%	63	27.51%	85	34.55%
		2+/2+	21	3.44%	11	4.80%	7	2.85%
		3./3.	8	1.31%	3	1.31%	12	4.88%
		3+/3+	1	0.16%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
	1086		611	98.0%	229	94.3%	246	96.7%

¹²¹ USAJFKSWCS Course Catalog, FY 2016, 46.

¹²² Statistics obtained from the SWEG Language Coordinator, dated October 20, 2016.

The data in Table 12 reveals a twenty-four percent ILR proficiency decrease in the novice (1) range for all languages after graduating from BSOLT and without immersion at the assigned unit. Additionally, there is an ILR proficiency decrease of fifteen percent in the novice (1) range and a twelve percent ILR proficiency decrease in the intermediate (2) range. Additional research is required to identify factors that contributed to an advanced (3) proficiency increase of ten percent.

Table 12. 4th and 8th MISG Oral Proficiency Interview Data¹²³

	SOUTHCOR	PACOM	CENTCOM	AFRICOM	EUCOM	All Languages
AH-AL/3+ to 3	26%	8%	3%	6%	9%	11%
IH-IL/2+ to 2	29%	34%	5%	8%	21%	20%
NH-NL/1+ to 1	25%	41%	64%	54%	46%	46%
NQ-NC/0+ to 0	20%	17%	28%	32%	24%	24%

3. SUMMARY

Table 13 reveals that with 1008 hours of classroom instruction and zero hours of immersion, the BSOLT program is capable of yielding ILR proficiency levels ranging in the one (1) to one plus (1+) range. Total investment for this return is approximately \$8,000.

Table 13. BSOLT Program Criteria Summary

Classroom	Immersion	Cost	Observed Proficiency
25 weeks or 1,008 hours	N/A	\$8,000.00	ACTFL: Novice High to Novice Low ILR: 1+/1+ to 1/1

¹²³ Statistics obtained from the Language Coordinators in both Military Information Support Groups, dated September 23, 2016.

4. CONCLUSION

A comparison between the three case studies strongly suggests that the best model for PSYOP foreign language acquisition requires extended immersion to achieve the proficiency levels required for MISO execution. Additionally, based on information analyzed from the three programs, it appears that classroom study is not a deciding factor in the acquisition of foreign language proficiency. The LDS program, which had the least amount of classroom study consistently, yielded the highest OPI scores. The FAO program, which had the longest amount of classroom study, yielded the second highest scores. It is also important to note however, that the FAO program included the second longest immersion. The BSOLT program, which had significantly longer classroom study than the LDS program yielded consistently lower OPI scores. It is important to note as well that the BSOLT program included no immersion. Analysis of data in this chapter further supports the conclusion that a foreign language acquisition program with immersion is likely to achieve advanced levels of proficiency.

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IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the evidence, it appears that special operations forces (SOF) Psychological Operations (PSYOP) personnel require advanced levels of foreign language and cultural proficiency to persuade foreign populations as part of the SOF core task military information support operations (MISO). PSYOP personnel depend on their ability to communicate with foreign populations. Evidence also suggests that interpreter support is both unreliable and often unavailable to support MISO. Persuasive communication requires foreign language and cultural proficiency. Analysis of official documents including MISO doctrine and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instructions revealed a requirement for advanced foreign language proficiency corresponding with an interagency language roundtable (ILR) proficiency score of three (3). Additionally, guidance from official documents suggests that an ILR score of four is required for persuasive communication. Currently PSYOP personnel are only required to achieve and maintain novice-level proficiency, which corresponds with an ILR score of one (1) to one plus (1+). Additionally, analysis of various acquisition methods and existing foreign language programs indicates a requirement for immersion to achieve advanced levels of proficiency. Currently, the basic special operations language-training (BSOLT) program employs a combination of grammar translation (GT) and communicative language teaching (CLT) methods. However, these methods are limited by BSOLT's classroom-centric environment. While students enjoy significant conversation through classroom discussions, they lack the necessary cultural immersion to gain communicative proficiency.

SOF doctrine indicates that required cultural immersion takes place in conjunction with operations. However, this method is unreliable, based on a number of factors revealed in the literature review. First, PSYOP personnel rarely return to the same location, which prevents cultural immersion based on the persistent and continuous engagement referenced in SOF doctrine. Second, current personnel management practices often assign personnel outside of their designation area of concentration (AOC). These facts make immersion-based foreign language and cultural acquisition virtually

impossible. SOF doctrine and recent USASOC command guidance suggest that SOF personnel require persistent and continuous interaction with host-nation populations to gain and maintain foreign language and cultural proficiency in addition to regional expertise.¹²⁴

Three courses of action (COAs) are offered to address the foreign language proficiency and acquisition gaps identified. The courses of action offered are modeled after the three case studies reviewed in Chapter III with minor changes, which include MISO and SOF specific training in the foreign language. Each course of action is evaluated against the criteria illustrated in Table 14. Expected proficiency based on the classroom and immersion exposure determine each program's effectiveness rating. Effectiveness ratings range from unsuccessful to highly successful.

Table 14. Program Criteria

Classroom	Immersion	Cost	Expected Proficiency
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Historically, the PSYOP annual throughput is approximately sixty officers and 120 enlisted personnel. These numbers would impact the COAs that follow based on acceptance and capacity at the various embassies and host nation facilities.

A. COA I—SHORT CLASSROOM/SHORT IMMERSION OPTION

The first COA recommended requires that all PSYOP personnel attend a two-phased version of BSOLT with Phase I consisting of classroom instruction occurring at the special warfare center and school (SWCS) at Fort Bragg, NC. Phase II would occur in the country and region assigned to individual PSYOP personnel at accession. Phase I would occur for a period of four to six months depending on the language difficulty level. This would equate to between 800 and 1,200 hours of classroom instruction prior to embarking on in-country and regional immersion. BSOLT classes would focus on MISO

¹²⁴ Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Publication 3-05, *Special Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 9.

and SOF-specific technical language instruction to facilitate joint combined exchange training (JCET) with host nation forces. The objective in BSOLT phase one would be attainment of and ILR proficiency of one plus, corresponding with novice-advanced-level speaking and listening proficiency.

Upon completion of BSOLT Phase I, PSYOP personnel would begin Phase II in their assigned country and region of focus for JCET facilitated advanced foreign language and culture acquisition. According to Army regulation:

The JCET Program permits special operations forces (SOF) to train in a foreign country through interaction with foreign military forces and is authorized by 10 USC 2011. It enhances SOF skills, such as instructor skills, language proficiency, and cultural immersion, critical to required missions generated by either existing plans or unforeseen contingencies.¹²⁵

JCETs should be structured to facilitate daily interaction and communication with host-nation forces and population. PSYOP personnel would live and work with the host-nation forces. PSYOP personnel would be paired with an experienced PSYOP liaison with advanced foreign language proficiency in the language of the host nation. The PSYOP liaison would be responsible for teaching MISO in support of the various SOF core tasks, rapport building, and military liaison duties and responsibilities. Additionally, PSYOP personnel would attend classes daily to for grammar, history, and cultural studies. Classes would be coordinated through a local or regional university, or an independent contract agency specializing in language instruction. The JCET would last for a period of no less than 179 days. This would facilitate a minimum of 1,790 hours of immersion and acculturation assuming ten hours of daily interaction with host-nation forces and population. The JCET would facilitate continuous interaction with host-nation forces and population in the target language, while observing and modeling cultural norms and activities. Interaction with the civilian populace would further enable specific dialect acquisition and acculturation. Phase II PSYOP trainees would be evaluated by the PSYOP liaison to ensure that they are acquiring predetermined competencies. Assessed

¹²⁵ Department of the Army, Army Regulation (AR) 12-15, *Joint Security Cooperation, Education and Training* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2011), 21.

competencies would be in accordance with outcomes determined for each module of the phase two program of instruction (POI).

This COA would require a newly developed POI and related courseware that merges MISO and SOF core training into language and culture acquisition. This course of action would leverage on-the-job training (OJT), putting doctrinal theory into practice through the JCET program. PSYOP personnel would actively participate in the process of executing MISO in the target language with host nation forces. Expenses for this course of action would exceed the current BSOLT based on temporary duty (TDY), incidental pay, and per diem. The expectation is that PSYOP personnel would return with intermediate-high levels of foreign language proficiency along with cultural and regional expertise resulting from immersion.

A major issue with this COA is the coordination required with host-nation forces, country clearances, and visas. While none of these are insurmountable, they would need to be closely monitored and forecasted. Additionally, the PSYOP liaison would require advanced foreign language proficiency, an established relationship with host-nation forces, extended immersion, and instructor training prior to assuming their role as the small group instructor (SGI) for phase two.

According to Table 15, COA I is rated highly effective. All PSYOP personnel would receive 1790 hours of immersion. Immersion combined with classroom education could feasibly enable the acquisition of two plus to three levels of ILR foreign language proficiency. Additionally, as a result of the extended immersion, PSYOP personnel would arrive at their unit with regional and cultural expertise. One area that is not discussed in this COA is a capstone exercise at the completion of training. Given that PSYOP personnel would be training alongside host-nation forces, it seems appropriate for them to participate in a capstone event with their host-nation counterparts.

Table 15. COA I Criteria Summary

Classroom	Immersion	Cost	Observed Proficiency
16 to 25 weeks or 800–1200 hours	25 weeks or 1790 hours	\$16,500 to \$18,000	ACTFL: Intermediate High to Advanced ILR: 2+ to 3

B. COA II—LONG CLASSROOM/SHORT IMMERSION OPTION

COA II also requires that all PSYOP personnel attend a two-phased version of BSOLT with Phase I consisting of classroom instruction occurring at the special warfare center and school (SWCS) at Fort Bragg, NC. Phase II would occur in the country and region assigned to individual PSYOP personnel at accession. COA II would require that all PSYOP personnel attend an extended version of BSOLT Phase I. The BSOLT Phase I extended version would include six to eight-months of classroom-based foreign language instruction. The additional classroom instruction would facilitate acquisition of intermediate-level reading and writing proficiency. This would accelerate literacy and enable advanced MISO training with host nation forces and government agencies occurring in Phase II. Classes would include all topics mentioned in COA I with the addition of interagency and intergovernmental protocols in the embassy environment. Phase II of COA II would also be JCET based in the same manner as COA I, with the addition of embassy environment familiarization.

PSYOP personnel who achieve intermediate-high levels of proficiency on the final OPI at SWCS would compete for advanced civilian education (ACE) to pursue either a bachelor's or master's degree in area studies or language arts at a university in their assigned region. This would serve as an instrument to gain advanced levels of proficiency, further acculturation, and professionalize the force through specialized training, education, and experience. All PSYOP personnel, regardless of rank or position, would be required annually to obtain a minimum number of continuing education credits toward language, regional, and cultural proficiency. Continuing education credits would be available through classroom and in region seminars coordinated by either SWCS or the Joint Special Operations University (JSOU).

COA II would require a newly developed POI and related courseware that merges MISO and SOF core training into language and culture acquisition. This course of action would leverage on-the-job training, putting doctrinal theory into practice through the JCET program. PSYOP personnel would actively participate in the process of executing MISO in the target language with host nation forces where an active influence campaign exists. Expenses for this course of action would exceed COA I based on the embassy attire clothing allowance and BSOLT extended classroom instruction. The expectation is that PSYOP personnel would return with intermediate (2) to advanced (3) levels of foreign language proficiency along with cultural and regional expertise resulting from immersion. Additionally, PSYOP would gain intergovernmental/interagency and embassy environment experience. Major issues associated with COA II mirror those discussed in COA I along with the addition of embassy coordination and transportation from host nation facilities to U.S. embassy locations.

The criteria summary in Table 16 illustrates that COA II is rated highly effective. All PSYOP personnel would receive 1790 hours of immersion. Immersion combined with extended classroom education could feasibly enable the acquisition of two plus to three plus levels of ILR foreign language proficiency. All PSYOP personnel would receive the same competencies discussed in COA I with the addition of advanced grammar instruction and experience with interagency, intergovernmental, and embassy protocol.

Table 16. COA II Criteria Summary

Classroom	Immersion	Cost	Observed Proficiency
25– 36 weeks or 1200– 1728 hours	25 weeks or 1790 hours	\$19,500–\$22,000	ACTFL: Intermediate High to Advanced High ILR: 2+ to 3+

C. COA III—LONG CLASSROOM/UNIT-BASED IMMERSION OPTION

This approach does not change the existing POI except for the extension of classroom instruction. Immersion would be programmed at the unit level through proper talent management and strict adherence to the Army force generation (ARFORGEN) cycle, as depicted in Figure 1. This COA relies heavily on actions at the unit after graduating from BSOLT.

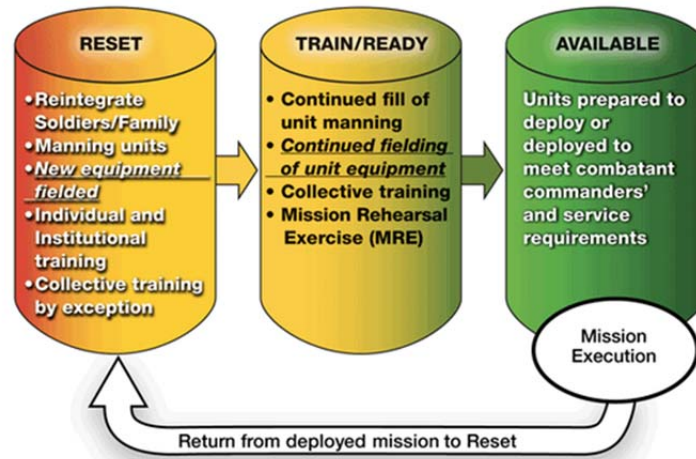


Figure 1. Army Force Generation Model¹²⁶

BSOLT classroom time would be extended to mirror the curriculum at the Defense Language Institute (DLI) at Monterey, California. After graduation from BSOLT, advanced civilian education would be offered to all PSYOP personnel during the reset phase. Currently, all Army special operation forces (ARSOF) are required to maintain a one to two dwell ratio, which means that for every one month spent deployed or on temporary duty, service members must spend two months at home. Based on this premise, the ARFORGEN cycle would allow PSYOP personnel returning from a six-month mission to attend six months of individual advanced civilian education or institutional training between reset and train/ready phase. In addition to advanced education, the unit would employ a “speak your language” policy similar to that of the

¹²⁶ Department of the Army, Army Regulation (AR) 525–29, *Army Force Generation* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2011), 5.

LDS missionaries at the mission training centers (MTCs). Doing so would ensure that PSYOP personnel remain fluent and comfortable speaking their foreign language throughout their career regardless of position. The intent is continuous foreign language improvement through a combination of uninterrupted use at the unit and while deployed. Additionally, all PSYOP personnel would be required to submit quarterly an individually tailored program to maintain and improve proficiency through advanced civilian and institutional education.

COA III is the easiest to implement given that there is no need for SWCS to coordinate with host nation military and security forces. This approach would be the least expensive option, as operations-based deployments would include immersion. COA III would require strict leadership implementation and participation at all levels. The expectation is that PSYOP personnel would achieve intermediate levels of foreign language proficiency at BSOLT. Regional and cultural proficiencies are gained through operationally based immersion.

A major issue associated with COA III is that it closely resembles the current language acquisition program at SWCS, which does not address language utilization and maintenance practices at the unit. Deployment data for PSYOP does not indicate an interest by unit level leadership to emphasize deployment related immersion. Additionally, personnel management practices do not currently ensure regional and cultural specialization of individual PSYOP personnel.

According to Table 17, COA III is rated ineffective. This is based primarily on the fact that unit level foreign language management has historically produced diminishing levels of proficiency. Based on historical trends, operationally based immersion would be too inconsistent to yield desired results. Current PSYOP organizational trends do not support the unit level actions essential to achieving the required levels of foreign language and cultural proficiency for MISO execution.

Table 17. COA III Criteria Summary

Classroom	Immersion	Cost	Observed Proficiency
25 weeks or 1,008 hours	N/A	\$8,000 to \$16,000.00	ACTFL: Novice Low to Novice High ILR: 1+/1+ to 1/1

D. SUMMARY

It is clear based on results from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) and foreign area officer (FAO) case studies that students benefit greatly from immersion. Additionally, the length of immersion appears to play a significant role in the ILR level of proficiency achieved. For example, the LDS program immerses missionaries for eighteen to twenty-two months, resulting in ILR levels in the advanced and superior range. The FAO program immerses FAOs for twelve months, resulting in ILR levels in the intermediate and advanced range. Length of classroom study is not an accurate predictor of language proficiency, based on the Oral Proficiency Interview scores achieved by LDS missionaries after only eight to eleven weeks of classroom instruction. By comparison, BSOLT and FAO personnel receive at least twenty-five weeks of classroom study, yet both programs consistently fail to yield the results observed by the LDS program.

Table 18. COA Comparative Summary

COA	Classroom	Immersion	Cost	Observed Proficiency
COA I	16 to 25 weeks or 800–1200 hours	25 weeks or 1790 hours	\$16,500 to \$18,000	ACTFL: Intermediate High to Advanced ILR: 2+ to 3
COA II	25– 36 weeks or 1200–1728 hours	25 weeks or 1790 hours	\$19,500– \$22,000	ACTFL: Intermediate High to Advanced High ILR: 2+ to 3+
COA III	25 to 64 weeks or 1,008– 2580 hours	Unit Based	\$8,000 to \$16,000.00	ACTFL: Novice Low to Novice High ILR: 1+/1+ to 1/1

These findings correlate closely with that of early childhood language development. Immersion appears to replicate the environment in which a child learns its language based on passive and active observation combined with trial and error, and feedback from others. Additionally, the ability to read and write does not appear to have any bearing on communicative proficiency, indicated by a child's ability to learn its language before the age of five. These facts suggest that immersion for the purpose of learning language and culture should precede grammar teaching just as it does for children. That said, adult learners have an advantage over children because they can read and, therefore, learn vocabulary at an accelerated rate.

Experts in the field of second-language learning suggest that language and culture cannot be separated as they are inextricably linked to one another. This further supports the need for immersion, as culture is nearly impossible to replicate in the classroom, especially given the vast differences that exist between primary and sub cultures within a geographical area. Immersion is absolutely essential to enable advanced levels of foreign language and cultural proficiency among PSYOP personnel.

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